

*Approved Meeting Minutes  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration  
Task Force  
C-111 Spreader Canal, Miami, FL  
September 30, 2009*

**Field Trip and Consultation**

The Task Force conducted a field trip on the afternoon of September 30, 2009. During the field trip subject matter experts provided orientation tours for a command and control facility for water control structures, the C-111 South Dade, Central & South Florida (C&SF) project, and the C-111 Spreader Canal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project. The Programmatic Regulations for CERP provide for consultation with the Task Force on key elements of the plan to include projects. Formal project consultation with the Task Force for the C-111 Spreader Canal project took place during the field trip.

**Welcome**

Mr. Strickland welcomed the Task Force members and public to the C-111 Spreader Canal Phase 1 Draft Project Implementation Report (PIR) field consultation.

**C-111 Spreader Canal Project Overview**

Mr. Michael Collis, the Project Manager, and Mr. Ray Wimbrough, the Planning Technical Lead, provided an overview of the project. The spreader canal was originally included in the 1994 South Dade General Re-Evaluation Report (GRR) of the 1948 C&SF project. In the late 1990s as the Restudy of the C&SF project (often referred to as the Yellow Book) was being completed, the spreader canal component was pulled out of the C&SF project and made a separate CERP project. The Yellow Book plan recommended a 500 csf pump station and a large spreader canal. While a canal is typically used as a drainage feature that ultimately discharges water to tide, the spreader canal is intended to fill up with water which would overflow the southern bank of the canal and spread out in a more natural distributed fashion.

The Project Delivery Team (PDT) was formed in 2002 and started the planning process to develop and evaluate alternatives. In 2006 the PDT was directed to split the project into two separate PIRs. The first project (Western PIR) will focus on the restoration of Taylor Slough and resolve uncertainties associated with the second project. The second project (Eastern PIR) will focus on restoration of the Model Lands and Southern Glades.

The benefits of the recommended plan include seepage control features that keep clean water in Everglades National Park (ENP) and water mounding features that will increase water stages in a controlled fashion to increase the groundwater table. The Western PIR features are estimated to cost \$152,198,000 with an additional \$3,347,000 for project monitoring. The PIR is scheduled to be completed by November 25, 2009 when it will be sent to the Corps HQ.

## **Comments and Discussion**

Mr. Albert Hiram-Alvarez (Dade County Climate Change Task Force) noted that limestone dissolves as more water flows through it and he asked whether the mounds will become less effective at holding water over time as the limestone dissolves. Mr. Wimbrough said that the period of analysis goes back fifty years and that the planning horizon projects fifty years into the future. While the project is anticipated to function well beyond fifty years, realistically it's difficult to predict what will happen beyond the fifty year time frame. The limestone will not be degraded in fifty years but more on the order of thousands of years.

Ms. Patty Power noting the \$94 million project cost in the Yellow Book asked whether the \$152 million was for half of the project. She also asked about the project purpose. Mr. Collis clarified that the \$152 million was just for the Western PIR and that the Eastern PIR project benefits will be more in line with the Yellow Book objectives. He said the cost for the Eastern PIR are not yet known since the PDT has not yet developed the alternatives. He explained that the project cost included the real estate as well as the construction.

Ms. Powers asked what the basis was for the Western PIR since they are not doing the Yellow Book project. Mr. Collis said the objective is to increase water deliveries to Florida Bay via Taylor Slough. Additional project authorization will be required since there has been a slight change in scope from what was in the Yellow Book and because the authorized cost has been exceeded. Both phases are supposed to be a logical extension and betterment of the federal project. He noted that all of the real estate costs – a substantial portion of the project cost - have been included in the initial PIR.

Mr. Khalil Kettering (NPCA) asked whether there was the potential for the cost to be below the estimate given the state of the economy. Mr. John Shaffer said substantial savings on both the real estate and construction costs have been realized recently.

Ms. Ann Mills asked for clarification on the Yellow Book. Mr. Wimbrough explained the Yellow Book is the documentation of the CERP which was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2000. The planning process for CERP projects begins with the features in the Yellow Book. These project features along with other alternatives are evaluated to arrive at the best solution for the environment and the nation as a whole. In this instance splitting the project would result in a better outcome.

Ms. Katie Edwards (Farm Bureau) asked how much of the project costs are for the real estate. Mr. Collis replied around \$47 million and he noted that that an additional 776 acres of land that needed to be purchased had been identified in the PIR. The decision to purchase the additional land will be made at a later date once the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) completes its discussions with affected interests and an analysis as part of the state's expedited project.

Ms. Edwards asked if there were any safeguards in place to keep those lands in farming while still accomplishing the restoration goals. Mr. Wimbrough said the project includes a monitoring plan that will provide the information required to be able to answer that question.

Mr. Khalil Kettering (NPCA) agreed that it is vital to keep agriculture viable in Miami Dade County while recognizing that Florida Bay is under siege. He said this is one of the few vital projects in CERP that is important to restoring the bay and that time is of the essence. He asked whether the plugs would go part of the way up as shown on the map on page 4 of the presentation or all the way up as shown on the map on page 6. Mr. Collis clarified the plugs will go all the way up.

Mr. Sole acknowledged that the PDT has modeled for certain impacts and that they want to do some real-time analysis. He asked if there are design changes that can be made to further minimize those impacts. Mr. Wimbrough said they did numerous sensitivity analyses and concluded that if additional levels of protection for farming are provided, then they won't have a project because the farming is taking place right up to the coastal ridge. They are constrained by law to maintain at least existing levels of protection and have no intention of violating it.

Ms. Megan Tinsley (Audubon of Florida) said Audubon has been very supportive of this project all along because of the benefits they expect downstream such as reverses in salinity and increases in productivity.

Mr. Strickland concluded by saying they had a robust conversation, some thoughtful questions, and were able to clarify some of the issues. Mr. May said he heard general support for the project and that it was ready to move forward.

*Approved Meeting Minutes  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration  
Task Force  
Doral Marriott – Miami, FL  
October 1, 2009*

**Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Tom Strickland called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM and welcomed everyone on behalf of Secretary Salazar and the President. He recognized Monica Medina who is soon to be the Principal Deputy Undersecretary of NOAA. He recognized the sense of optimism and progress at the June Task Force meeting noting that while there were some difficult issues and other points of view there was a sense that we have a focus and a window of opportunity to make meaningful progress. He said that sense of optimism was carried over yesterday when he had the opportunity to see significant progress on the Kissimmee River restoration. He also recognized the well organized field trip and consultation for the C-111 Spreader Canal project which will provide additional important ecosystem improvements. Mr. Sole, the Vice Chair, said that yesterday's field trip was productive and thanked everyone who participated. He recognized Mr. Eric Buermann who serves as the Chair, SFWMD Governing Board. He said it is a time of optimism for Everglades restoration and that he and Governor are greatly heartened by the team and that success was in sight. Mr. Eric Buermann said there is a new spirit of cooperation between the state and federal partners and for the first time money seems to be flowing and things seem to be happening and a lot of credit needs to be given to this partnership. Commissioner Katy Sorenson Miami Dade Commissioner was also recognized and she said she was happy to be present.

**Task Force Members Attending**

Tom Strickland, Chair, Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Mike Sole, Vice Chair, Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection  
Roman Gastesi for Jose 'Pepe' Diaz, Commissioner, Miami Dade County  
Jay Geldermann for John Cruden, Acting Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice  
Jim Giattina for Pete Silva, Assistant Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Dexter Lehtinen, Special Assistant, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians  
Monica Medina, Senior Advisor to Dr. Lubchenco, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Ann Mills, Deputy Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Patty Power for Jim Shore, Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Rock Salt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), U.S. Department of the Army  
Miguel Torres for Linda Lawson, Director, Office of Safety, Energy and Environment, U.S. Department of Transportation  
Carol Wehle, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District  
Shannon Estenoz, Special Advisor, Chair, Water Resources Advisory Commission

Mr. Dexter Lehtinen provided a handout (Encl. 2) and noted that water is at 11 feet in WCA 3A while the government says that it's a killer when the level is above 10.5 feet. In addition there are 685 snail kites down from 3,000 and WCA 3A is on the way out. The state is in violation of

the consent decree and there is twice as much phosphorus in Lake Okeechobee than when he filed the lawsuit in 1988. CERP has been abandoned and a judge found no public purpose in 103,000 acres of the River of Grass project.

Mr. Jay Geldermann noted Mr. John Cruden sends his regrets for being unable to attend. He stated that the DOJ Environment Division strongly supports the efforts of this Task Force to implement the provisions of WRDA and all of the statues providing for Everglades restoration. Ms. Carol Wehle welcomed the new members and said she represents the SFWMD, a regional government, and the local sponsor for CERP. They were created to be the local sponsor for the C&SF Project and have had a long, productive history and good relationship with the federal government. Ms. Shannon Estenoz stated that she is a member of the SFWMD Governing Board and a non-voting member of the Task Force in her capacity as Chair of the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) which is the stakeholder advisory group to the Task Force.

Mr. Rock Salt reported the House/Senate Conference Committee posted their Conference Report for the Corps' budget for this FY and it has new starts for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and Site 1 which means that all of the WRDA 2007 projects will be under construction this year. They now need to focus on the next round of projects to be authorized as well as the possibility of a new WRDA. Mr. Mike Sole said there have been great successes with the River of Grass (ROG) acquisition and the Circuit Court basically concurred and has authorized them to move forward with the Certificates of Participation (COPs). It is now headed to the Supreme Court and so far things are on task.

Ms. Monica Medina said she is quite impressed with the work, organization, and staffing that supports this effort. She said she works on a number of these types of efforts but that this one is the one most people try to emulate. When you step back it is impressive from an organizational perspective, in its planning, and for its success over time. Ms. Ann Mills said she is also very impressed with the Task Force and its accomplishments. The Secretary takes this mission very seriously and USDA is committed to ecosystem restoration using voluntary agricultural practices. Improving water quality is one of the Secretary's top priorities and they are pleased that Farm Bill funding for practices in Florida is going up. Mr. Jim Giattina noted he is the alternate for Mr. Pete Silva who, although was unable to attend, has already been briefed on this effort.

Ms. Patty Power noted she is the alternate for Mr. Jim Shore for the Seminole Tribe. Mr. Miguel Torres said he is replacing Mr. James Christian who was recently promoted and moved to Utah. He looks forward to being a productive member of this Task Force. Mr. Roman Gastesi noted he is representing Miami Dade Commissioner Pepe Diaz who is attending a Trade Mission in Columbia.

Mr. Strickland said he is struck by all the work that has been done and the various levels of government cooperation noting that it was one of the greatest examples of intergovernmental coordination that he had ever seen. He said that it was fitting that Ken Burns' documentary on the History of National Parks, America's Best Idea, would focus on Everglades National Park tonight. He noted the great vision and leadership which has led to the establishment of the National Parks as well as the state parks in Florida. These things don't just happen without having focused efforts over time and he noted they are a part of this historic effort. Mr.

Strickland presented the June 2009 meeting minutes. Mr. Sole made a motion to approve which was seconded by Ms. Estenoz. The minutes were approved without objection.

#### **Follow-up from the June Task Force (TF) meeting**

Mr. Dan Kimball reviewed the three assignments given to the Working Group (WG) and Science Coordination Group (SCG) at the June 2009 TF meeting. The tasks were to provide:

- 1) a summary of the types of climate change research and actions that are being planned or conducted by the various agencies relevant to the restoration of the South Florida Ecosystem;
- 2) a plain language synthesis of the new scientific and technical concepts that have evolved since the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) was authorized in 2000; and
- 3) a summary of the key species and actions necessary to help control invasive exotic animals in south Florida.

He said that the WG and SCG had been very busy and that a lot of activity had been devoted to these assignments to include gathering and discussing key agency activities for each of the topics at the July WG and SCG meeting and establishing drafting teams. Volunteer experts had been organized and had prepared three drafts that were sent to the WG and SCG members for input. They are going to meet again in October to discuss the drafts in detail and then seek consensus. Dan then reviewed the key points for each of the topics.

#### *Climate Change*

He noted that of all the topics, member agencies submitted the most activities for climate change. South Florida is a very vulnerable landscape to climate change and impacts will include rising temperatures, reduced precipitation, more intense and frequent storms, and sea level rise. The paper will focus on impacts to the natural system and adaptation. To counter the effects of climate change, Everglades restoration will produce healthier landscapes and wildlife which will reduce vulnerability and promote resilience in the ecosystem. The brief will also describe the impacts to the built environment and what that means in terms of flood control and water supply. A number of adaptation strategies will be identified to include building codes, infrastructure changes and coastal defenses. The paper will highlight the uncertainty regarding the range of climate change impacts and the very long time frames they are dealing with and provide examples of the types of research underway. One conclusion is that traditional planning concepts are obsolete due to climate change and they need a different way of looking at planning and modeling. Decision making will demand new information needs and coordination is the key to providing those needs. The Task Force could be very helpful in coordinating the studies related to climate change and with consistent messaging.

#### *New Science*

This information brief has been the most complex and challenging. It will describe new scientific insights since CERP was authorized to include how the natural system functioned historically. It will address the degradation - such as the loss of landscape features, water quality impacts, and stressed estuaries - that continues to occur in the absence of ecosystem-wide restoration. It will summarize key advances in scientific tools and methods like better models and monitoring.

### *Invasive Exotic Animals*

This information brief will summarize the threats and complexity of invasive exotic animals. It will note how much we have learned about dealing with exotic plants and will build on that knowledge. The brief will outline the key elements of strategic management to include prevention, detection and assessment. It will summarize the various intergovernmental organizations that are in place to deal with invasive exotics such as the Florida Invasive Animal Task Team (FIATT) and the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (ECISMA).

Dan Kimball explained that they are seeking to synthesize a lot of complex information and while not easy topics; all go to the heart of ecosystem restoration. The goal of the papers is to provide science-based information in a crisp, readable format to the Task Force that will serve as the genesis of more advanced discussions. The next step is to review the current drafts and comments at the next joint WG and SCG meeting in October and to provide the briefs to the Task Force when completed.

Mr. Lehtinen noted the tribe's serious concerns with loose phrases like science concepts. He said it is important to recognize that science is repeatable, provable data that can be reviewed. He recognized that while there are some policy statements in CERP that people on the SCG would like to revise, the Pro Regs and WRDA 2000 say how those things will be changed. The tribe is afraid that scientists from other agencies will throw WCA 3A to the wolves. The tribe believes the requirements in WRDA 2000 should not be changed unless it has gone through the review process. For example, the tribe believes that abandoning the EAA Storage Reservoir violates the review process and the Corps and the SFWMD have walked away from CERP.

Mr. Sole said he did not want to bridle this group's pursuit of science. He recognized that policy decisions for CERP were made based on the science at the time and upon negotiations. But he noted that CERP also recognized the critical need for adaptive management so that the latest science can be used and to identify areas where they were wrong.

Ms. Wehle noted an excellent document from DEP on climate change and said that the Governing Board has requested a presentation on it at its December meeting. She asked Mr. Kimball to be at that meeting to inform the board of this effort. She commended them for including growth management in the paper and recommended that they have the local governments at the table when they are developing suggestions for this area. She said that the SFWMD will depend heavily on the science from USGS and they are very concerned about the coastal wellfields and saltwater intrusion. She noted that because the Governing Board deliberates on how the SFWMD works with local governments on twenty year permits and long-term sources of water, they need to know whether a coastal wellfield has a twenty year life span or whether they need to develop alternative strategies.

Ms. Estenoz said the challenge is that they are making decisions now for the next 10 - 20 years. She is interested in knowing what climate change will do to localized flooding over the next ten years, for example, and whether they will see more water in the street more often. Commissioner Sorenson agreed and said politicians need the information between election cycles. She suggested this process feed into the local processes such as the Mayor's Sustainability Task Force and the Climate Change Advisory Task Force. She noted that while

growth management is a delicate but critical issue, they need strong and clear recommendations. Ms. Medina said that NOAA is working hard to develop these types of products so that they can better adapt.

Mr. Sole encouraged the members to read the Global Climate Change Impacts report. He asked whether a wilderness area designation impacts their ability to manage invasive exotics. Mr. Kimball noted that ENP has 1.5 million acres and that 1.3 million of those are legislated wilderness. The designation does not preclude but provides for additional steps that need to be taken for invasive exotics. Mr. Strickland suggested they schedule a substantial amount of time to discuss these issues at the next Task Force meeting. He reported that Secretary Salazar issued a Secretarial Directive establishing a Strategic Plan and Process for Interior on how the various bureaus will approach climate change. He also noted the draft Strategic Plan for the FWS that will look at climate change impacts based upon their responsibility as a land manager for a fifth of the nation's lands. He said there was a huge imperative to identify the immediate impacts b.

## **Project and Program Update**

### *Corps Federal Projects*

Mr. Stu Appelbaum noted the format of the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) has been updated (Encl. 3a) to provide more project information out to 2020. He reported on the progress for program level activities to include approving the CERP land crediting policy, executing the Master Agreement, the second amendment to the Design Agreement, and Pre-Partnership Crediting Agreements. The Pre-Partnership Crediting Agreement preserves the ability of the local sponsor to get credit for activities completed prior to signing a formal Project Partnership Agreement (PPA).

Mr. Appelbaum reported on project level activities which included:

- Kissimmee River Restoration – Backfilling is currently underway in the northern and most upper end of the Kissimmee. A number of contracts have been awarded to include one for the southern end which will complete the last sections of backfilling.
- Modified Water Deliveries (MWD) – The Tamiami Trail contract was awarded on September 25. The bid climate is favorable resulting in more work for less money while putting people back to work. The Engineering Design Report for the conveyance and seepage features should be completed by the end of the year. The swale pilot project work is scheduled to be installed in FY 2010. The estimated MWD completion date is still 2013.
- Picayune Strand – The award of the Merritt Canal Pump Station is anticipated by the end of October. He explained the extensive process to get to an award noting that price is not the only factor but rather the best value to the government.
- Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (ERTP), Phase I – The Biological Opinion on the Interim Operational Plan (IOP) is set to expire in late 2010. Consultation is underway with the FWS to maximize operational flexibilities to improve species and habitat conditions while maintaining C&SF project purposes. The Draft Biological Opinion is scheduled to be completed in July 2010.

Mr. Appelbaum reviewed the projects that are being readied for the next WRDA which included the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir, C-111 Spreader Canal Design Test, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW), and the Broward County WPAs. He also reported the status of the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) Rehabilitation noting a tremendous amount of work underway including three cut-off wall task orders to reinforce 143 miles of levee surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

#### *ENP Federal Projects*

Mr. Kimball provided an update on four projects:

- Tamiami Trail Next Steps - Authorized in the 2009 Appropriations Act, it directed the Secretary of the Interior through the NPS to evaluate the feasibility of additional bridging on Tamiami Trail (beyond MWD) to restore more natural flows to ENP and Florida Bay and to restore habitat and ecological connectivity between the park and the WCAs to the north. The Act directed the Feasibility Report be submitted to Congress no later than March 11, 2010. The EIS process is underway and six alternatives have been identified. A draft EIS will be available in early December for agency review and in mid January 2010 for public review.
- Cape Sable Project - Two canals from the 1920s have created a problem by draining freshwater out of the Cape Sable area and introducing saltwater into the back country marshes. The EIS and FONSI for this project were completed in July. As a stimulus project, all of the funds must be obligated by September 30, 2010. Estimated to cost \$12 million, it represents a huge opportunity to improve conditions.
- Clean Out Exotics Along Tamiami Trail – This project started in September to remove exotics south of 16 culvert sets along the Tamiami Trail from the northeast corner of the park to the L-67 extension. Brazilian Pepper, elephant ears, and other exotics are being cut and treated with approved herbicides leaving the native hardwoods intact. FDOT and the Miccosukee police have assisted with traffic control. The project is funded by FWS and NPS and they would like to do a vista-clearing project in the areas between culverts and are trying to identify a funding source for that project.
- Shallow Seepage Barrier – On August 14 rock miners began constructing a shallow seepage barrier pilot project along the L-31 North. Scheduled to be completed on September 14, the seepage wall will be 1,000 foot long, 18 feet deep, and 24 inches wide. It is fully instrumented and results are expected after the first of the year. This information will be used to see what type of benefits this approach might provide in terms of seepage management.

#### *State Expedited Projects*

Mr. Ken Ammon provided an update (Encl. 3b) on the projects reported at the June Task Force meeting:

- C-111 Spreader Canal Phase 1 – The design is now 100% complete, bids have been received, and construction is anticipated to begin this year. This successful plan was the result of a public process and is consistent with Corps' PIR.

- Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Phase 1 – Two of the three contracts will be awarded and construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2010.
- C-43 West (Caloosahatchee River) Reservoir – 100% of the land has been acquired and clearing will soon begin. The land crediting policy has been resolved, a draft PIR is anticipated shortly, and it is hoped it will be included in the next WRDA.
- Acme Basin B – Water that historically flowed into the refuge had been diverted for the last 40 years and it needs to be re-directed. Phase 2 of this project consists of a 340 acre reservoir to help provide flood protection requirements due to the diversion. Construction of the phase 2 impoundment is expected to be completed in mid November.
- Long Term Plan – In 2009 over 1.1 million acre of feet of water has been treated and when combined with the BMPs, more than 3,200 metric tons of phosphorus were prevented from entering the Everglades. Not all goals are being met and so the existing Stormwater Treatment Areas (STA) are being expanded. It is anticipated that the expansion areas will be flow capable by December 2010
- Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir A1 – The litigation on this project was dismissed and its final utilization is dependent on the River of Grass (ROG) acquisition.
- CERP Update – 242,500 acres or 60% of the estimated lands needed for CERP have been acquired. \$1.64 billion has been expended with \$109 million coming from local governments. Approximately \$518 million has been spent on design and construction to date.
- ROG – Phase 1 planning was completed in September and identified five primary combinations of features for further consideration in Phase II. There will be a pause between Phase I and Phase II to develop the best strategy for completing this process. Some ROG issues are in litigation and a Supreme Court ruling is expected early next year on the bond validation followed by a bond closing in early May.

Ms. Estenoz noted she has requested a WRDA 2010 monthly update be provided to the Governing Board and the WRAC. Time frames for WRDA are tight and deadlines cannot slip or they will lose the window of opportunity. She noted her concern with staying on track and meeting these deadlines. Commissioner Sorenson added that thirty-one square miles in the Model Lands area have been acquired by Miami Dade County which is the single largest public land holder in CERP.

### **Programmatic Regulations (Pro Regs)**

Mr. Appelbaum noted the review of the Pro Regs has been underway since May 2008 and is required every 5 years. Scoping comments were received and the team has been developing concepts for improving and streamlining the process. He reviewed the emerging concepts but noted that they have not been fully vetted. A major concern deals with the role of the Plan versus the role of PIRs. The team believes the Plan should be the central focus of the effort as laid out in the Yellow Book in 1999. Although WRDA 2000 specifies specific statutory roles for the PIRs, individual projects are not standalone projects in the traditional sense but are part of a

bigger system. They want to use appropriate metrics to determine how the project will perform in terms of the Plan.

Stu also explained that the current regulations require six Guidance Memoranda (GM) and it needs to be determined if the GMs are still needed or if guidance to the team should be less intensive. The identification of water for the natural system and the savings clause GMs will remain because they are complex technically. Interim Goals (IG) are required by WRDA 2000 and Interim Targets (IT) are required by the Pro Regs. The MISP is currently identified in the Pro Regs but it is solely focused on CERP and the Integrated Delivery Schedule needs to be included. Mr. Appelbaum noted that having a better process and framework would help to move restoration forward but that it alone will not solve all the problems. He reviewed the schedule for the Pro Regs review and noted the intent is to promulgate the final revised rule in July 2010.

Ms. Estenoz stated that the alternative approach, in her view, makes sense. Mr. Appelbaum said the alternative approach entails scientific consensus on the overall objectives and priorities and what projects are needed to accomplish those objectives. Ms. Wehle requested that the regulations be written in a way that they are clearly understandable to everyone and not subject to personal interpretation. Mr. Appelbaum reminded the members that the Pro Regs require the concurrence of the State of Florida and Interior, which makes the rulemaking more challenging. Ms. Estenoz asked for clarification on the difference between IT and IG. Mr. Appelbaum clarified that the development process is similar but the difference is in the approvals. The IG is statutorily required and IT is a creation to take care of the other water related needs. Ms. Power added that IG is related to the ecological and the IT is related to the built system noting the savings clause was the driver.

Ms. Power asked whether the Corps was coordinating the revision of the Pro Regs with the revisions of Principles and Guidelines (P&Gs). Mr. Appelbaum said that up until this point he has not seen anything that will cause a conflict. Mr. Rock Salt added they have to get cleared by OMB and although the Pro Regs are Army regulations, Interior and the Governor of Florida must concur.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Sara Fain (National Parks Conservation Association) reminded the group that the Pro Regs are the rules and regulations that guide the implementation of CERP and to make sure CERP does indeed restore the Everglades. NPCA is excited with some of the new emerging concepts that have come out. The Next Added Increment analysis has been a roadblock to planning projects and the Everglades cannot be restored by looking to justify it with one project but rather by looking at the entire program. Interior is the beneficiary of so many of these projects and NPCA believes the role of Interior needs to be on that level to recognize the benefits are coming to Interior and the American people. Mr. Sole added that there will be significant benefits to the system and it is not just one entity that is receiving the benefits.

Ms. Estenoz clarified the tripartite arrangement that WRDA established gives Interior a unique role and responsibility to protect its specific interest. Ms. Wehle said that Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) are unique to CERP and have caused issues at Corps HQ because they are different. She asked that anything they could do to make the PIR review process easier and less complex would be helpful. Mr. Strickland added that while Interior has a particular

interest in the role they play as stewards for certain assets, they are doing their best to have a broader vision about the collective interests. He noted that the land Interior manages does not exist in a vacuum and they have to look at the whole ecosystem and is therefore a partnership of necessity.

### **Land Acquisition Strategy (LAS)**

Ms. Theresa Woody explained that the Land Acquisition Task Team (LATT) updates the LAS every year for the Task Force in response to an April 2000 GAO Report that recommended a land acquisition plan. A team effort is used because no one agency can capture what is being accomplished in south Florida. She noted that key lands had been acquired very early in the project planning process so that opportunities would not be lost. Ms. Woody explained that the proposed 2009 LAS had been reviewed by the Working Group, Science Coordination Group, and the Water Resources Advisory Commission. She briefly reviewed the LAS and highlighted several maps which powerfully communicate different aspects of land acquisition to include conservation lands, the conceptual CERP project footprints, and mitigation lands. This year the team added another data layer for conservation banks which help protect critical habitat for the panther.

Mr. Dexter Lehtinen said he appreciated the great deal of work that has gone into this document adding that it is useful but noted he did not particularly agree with the use of the word ‘strategy’. Ms. Carol Wehle identified two emerging issues: one is finding they don’t need 100% of the land that has already been purchased and the other is finding they need additional lands. She said that both issues will be worked through in an open process with the Governing Board.

Mr. May noted a letter (Encl. 4) from Ms. Nancy Peyton on behalf of the Florida Wildlife Federation explaining the importance of the LAS for those involved in the restoration effort. Mr. Strickland noted Mr. Lehtinen’s comments and accepted the report on behalf of the Task Force.

### **Consultation**

#### *Final Draft CERP Master Recreation Plan (MRP)*

Ms. Shauna Allen explained that she and Mr. Jerry Krenz from the SFWMD serve as the Project Managers for the MRP. The purpose of the MRP is to provide a comprehensive overview of the recreation needs and opportunities that are compatible with the restoration purpose of the CERP projects. While not a decision document, it does provide recreation planning guidance to the Project Delivery Teams (PDTs). There has been extensive public and stakeholder involvement throughout the entire process and a series of 18 workshops were held throughout south Florida in 2006 and 2008. The team is identifying and evaluating project impacts on a regional basis and they will be taking into consideration existing recreation in the project area. They will also evaluate adjacent land uses and evaluate opportunities to link or partner with other agencies. She noted that operations and maintenance for recreation is the responsibility of the local sponsor. She noted that the 2000 Florida Visitor Study indicated that \$3.5 billion in tax revenue from tourism and recreation was provided to Florida and that amounts to \$62 billion in tourist expenditures to emphasize that recreation is an indicator of project success in addition to the ecological benefits that will be derived. Because of a number of letters from the Gladesmen expressing concern about impacts to traditional cultural properties, they engaged an ethnographic study of the Gladesmen. A draft was released in June for public review and they are now

consulting with the state and the tribes on the findings and have not yet finalized their recommendations. Some of the information derived from the study will be incorporated into the MRP which then go out for public review in October /November 2009 with the final plan scheduled for approval in December 2009.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Eric Buermann asked whether the ethnographic study included the tribes. Ms. Allen replied that it did not include the tribes but she noted that they are consulting with them. Commissioner Sorenson asked who the Gladesmen were. Ms. Allen referenced a study done by Ms. Laura Ogden in 2005 on the Gladesmen and noted they are an offshoot of the Florida cracker culture and date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Mr. Matthew Schwartz (Sierra Club) appreciated the presentation and the use of the term 'expressed public interest.' He said that public recreation is an important economic value and represents the face of Florida. He said that a lot of the recreational aspects of the CERP program are difficult for the public to find out about. For example, he recently heard about the Harold Campbell Public Use Area at STA 3/4 which attracts birds and wildlife and has four miles of levy for walking. He said he heard about the Gladesmen study at the tail end and said that he did not want to be critical of the culture but thought that it is a euphemism for motorized recreation. He also noted that while protecting the culture of the Gladesmen, very often people who do not use motorized recreation get left out. He suggested they need to bring in the comments of the tourists and he suggested that there needs to be different kinds of public outreach.

Ms. Allen replied that the study will be useful for the program and will set the standard for future ethnographic studies. She agreed that public involvement and outreach is always a challenge and noted that they conducted over thirty-six public meetings over the course of two years and still found people that did not know what was going on. She said that the Corps and the SFWMD will continue to engage in public outreach very heavily and will continue to use all the media they have available.

Mr. Jim Giattina said that it is important to keep in mind as this is being developed, the recreational uses of water features and the implication on what water quality standards are appropriate for those features. Ms. Wehle said the SFWMD website has a recreation guide which is a great brochure. She welcomed any suggestions on how to broaden the distribution list to get the information out. She noted there is a certain carrying capacity for the STAs and they don't want to shut it down because there are too many people out there and it is interfering with water quality.

### **Proposed Outdoor Recreation Park**

Mr. Gastesi introduced the proposal as very preliminary and said that Miami Dade County has been working with Collier County. Mr. Kevin Asher from Miami Dade County explained that the county is looking for a property to expand wilderness recreational activities and offset some of the adverse problems caused by off highway vehicles (OHVs). They conducted a feasibility study with the state and identified a county training and transition airport that is in between Big Cypress and Everglades National Park. It is approximately 24,000 acres and can be transitioned from aviation use to recreation, conservation, and preservation. The area has lakes, a jet port, and a 2-mile long runway, but it also has 1,500 acres intact with hammocks and cypress heads.

The plan includes removing swamp buggy trails, relocating some of the Gladesmen campsites, and eliminating hunting from the area. It also includes converting aviation land use to recreation, confining recreational activities to the impacted areas, and restoring sheetflow to the un-impacted areas. They propose expanding the envelope of the Big Cypress Management Plan to this property and note that less than 1% of the property would be used for off road trails. Currently they are working with Collier County to execute a minor change in their land use plan and intend to work on the site plan next year. It is their hope that it can become a complementary CERP project.

Ms. Wehle asked for a status on the land use amendment. Mr. Asher said it is scheduled to go to the Board in December or January. Ms. Estenoz asked about the permitting requirements. Mr. Asher said they are minor because they are using areas already impacted in the 1960s except for wetlands, which will become a permitting issue when a fixed site plan is developed. Ms Estenoz asked if they would be developing an OHV Management Plan because of the proposed increase in off road vehicle use for this area which will go from 150 to 3,000 visits per year. Mr. Asher said there will be more visitors, but that the current 45 miles of trails will be reduced to less than 15 miles. Although there will be more visitors their impact will be decidedly less. Ms. Estenoz reminded him that they need to include what happens when people go off the trail. Mr. Asher acknowledged those are issues they will be dealing with. Ms. Wehle asked if they were anticipating getting the OHV folks from the Picayune area. Mr. Asher said that Collier County's preferred scenario is to seek a sole OHV area in Collier County. In the absence of finding that site they are willing to joint venture with Dade County on this project. Ms. Wehle suggested they come in early in the process for fee application and noted that this will be handled out of the SFWMD HQs. She offered to set a meeting up so they can identify the environmental issues early on.

Mr. Buermann asked for clarification on how this project will restore natural sheetflow and reduce greenhouse emissions. Mr. Asher said that certain fill pads that currently impact sheetflow will be removed. As for greenhouse gases, it has been found that is better for people to run vehicles in an area that is better managed for it.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Martha Musgrove (Decision Makers Forum/ Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) noted she is there on behalf of Mr. John Marshall. She introduced the Florida Ranchlands Project which was initiated by the World Wildlife Fund and underwritten by SFWMD and several private foundations and corporations. She explained that they are attempting to price out the value of an ecosystem or wetlands for the purpose of enhancing the benefits. She referred to pages 18 – 19 of the Land Acquisition Strategy which talks about leveraging the funds available for land acquisition and land management. The preliminary results of the Florida Ranchlands Project are that it is an effective way to hold and store water and an acceptable way of preserving agriculture. Ms. Musgrove clarified she is talking about farming water which is a new product and a new revenue stream that can be used beneficially for ecosystem restoration. There are some endangered species issues that have to be addressed. The Marshall Foundation has taken an interest in establishing a monetary value for the benefits that are achieved. She said that while WRDA states they don't need an economic justification, there is language about cost effectiveness. Ms. Musgrove encouraged the Task Force members to attend the Everglades

Coalition Conference scheduled from January 7 – 10, 2010 and highlighted a panel on valuing ecosystem services.

Ms. Sara Fain (NPCA) thanked Mr. Strickland for his remarks on the Ken Burns' film and for joining them at the amazing event the prior week in Central Park. She said that millions of people will be watching the series and all eyes are on us. She thanked the leadership at the state and federal level and said they need to build on this momentum. She provided a handout (Encl. 5) called the Roadmap for Restoration signed by 26 organizations. She urged the Task Force to take advantage of the momentum and break ground on projects, plan new projects, and make the most of the time they have.

Mr. Gene Duncan (Miccosukee Tribe) said he heard on the news that Iran has nuclear production facilities and successfully fired a missile the prior week while the Senate is talking about global climate change. He said the Everglades is dying today, WCA 3A is flooded, tree islands are under water, and phosphorus levels in Lake Okeechobee are continually climbing, etc. and the Task Force is talking about global climate change just like the Senate. The state has walked away from CERP projects in favor of the River of Grass and the Yellow Book is not being built and projects are being abandoned. He said the Task Force needs to ask itself what function it serves. He said he is baffled.

Mr. Jonathan Ullman (Sierra Club) quoted from John Muir, 'one may as well damn for water tanks the people's cathedrals and churches for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man,' referring to valleys and canyons he cared about in the west. He said in the Everglades, the damn is Tamiami Trail and the cathedral is Shark River Slough. He explained that scientists have long been saying that eleven miles of Tamiami Trail must be elevated to restore the slough and said that one mile is only a start. He said the NPS is reviewing its next steps for additional bridging and the results will go to Congress next spring. The inability to flow water in Shark River Slough may end up costing the Everglades because the Miami Dade Climate Change Task Force has predicted that by the end of his four year old daughter's life the Everglades will be consumed by salt water and Shark River Slough is the key. Without restoring Tamiami Trail the Everglades will be lost. He said they are at a critical juncture and the folks in this room are going to decide what happens to the Everglades. He asked who the government serves and whether it serves the airboaters, FPL a Fortune 500 company, the Miccosukee Tribe, or the rock miners with cowboy hats. He said that the government serves the American people who own ENP and hope it is restored for future generations. He provided a letter from former Mayor Xavier Suarez (Encl. 6) endorsing the elevation of Tamiami Trail.

Mr. John Winfree (Nature Conservancy) said the Land Acquisition Strategy is an excellent document that shows the big picture of Everglades restoration. He thanked the Task Force and noted all the hard work and cross agency coordination that goes into this document. He read from a section of the report concerning the Natural Lands Report and said they are very close to achieving the objective given the explosion of interest among landowners in conservation easements. This year alone they are using the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) like crazy and have had over fifty applications. He said about a dozen or more projects will be funded representing over \$70 million. They have five dozen landowners in the northern Everglades

representing over 200,000 acres that want to participate in conservation programs. He thanked everyone and thanked Ms. Woody for all her work on the LAS.

Ms. Megan Tinsley (Audubon of Florida) said she was pleased to see the progress on the C-111 project which will actually move water through the ecosystem. She said it is the ecological benefits that will determine whether a project is successful, not when it is built, or when the pumps are turned on. She appreciates the comments made by Ms. Estenoz regarding the WRDA 2010 deadlines. They recently learned through their science staff working in the southern Everglades that Roseate Spoonbills can respond to even small changes in the design of the water control structures. Restoration is still possible and they have the ability to bring back those large numbers of wading birds. As the C-111 comes online they will see a tremendous ecosystem response.

### **Closing Comments**

Mr. Sole said that the best thing the Task Force could do is to use their time to focus on how to maintain this momentum as they look for solutions. He wished Mr. Salt and COL Pantano the best of success in moving Tamiami Trail as well as other projects forward. He agreed that they need to find as much consensus on WRDA 2010 as possible adding that when they are together, then good things happen. Mr. May announced that the next WG/SCG meeting is scheduled on October 21-22, 2009. Mr. Strickland said they are hoping to hold several ground breakings before the end of the year and they are trying to schedule the next Task Force meeting around Secretary Salazar's calendar. Mr. Gastesi invited the Task Force to meet in Key West.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

### Enclosures:

1. Briefing Binder
  - a. Maps
  - b. Agenda
  - c. Draft Meeting Minutes
2. Dexter Lehtinen's handout
3. Projects and Program Update
  - a. IDS Prototype 'placemat'
  - b. State Expedited Restoration Projects presentation
4. Nancy Peyton's letter of support re: LAS
5. Sara Fein's handout
6. Former Mayor Xavier Suarez letter